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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for enhancing the phonemic awareness and phonetic ability needed when decoding print and spelling. The targeted population consists of first grade students in a growing suburban community located in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. Evidence for the existence of this problem are documented through a letter identification test, a developmental phonics inventory, and the theme and skills tests developed by the publisher of the basal reading series used in this school. Analysis of probable cause data indicate that students lack phonemic skill ability when decoding and spelling words. Reviews of curricula content and instructional strategies reveal a stronger emphasis on Whole Language approach to teaching reading as opposed to a more phonetic approach. A review of solution strategies suggested by noted experts in reading research has resulted in the selection of using a more "balanced" approach to teaching reading to first graders. Intervention will employ implementation of the "Working with Words" strategies (Cunningham) in addition to the school's basal program. Post intervention data will indicate an improvement in the phonemic awareness and phonetic skills needed to decode and spell words. This is shown through letter identification, developmental phonics inventory scores, and basal tests. This will occur through students performing "Working with Words" strategies on a weekly basis. Contains 36 references and 3 figures of data. Appendixes contain lesson plans, word lists, and worksheets. (Author/RS)

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PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND PHONICS: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR BETTER READING, DECODING, AND SPELLING

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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This report describes a program for enhancing the phonemic awareness and phonetic ability needed when decoding print and spelling. The targeted population consists of first grade students in a growing suburban community located in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. Evidence for the existence of this problem are documented through a letter identification test, a developmental phonics inventory, and the theme and skills tests developed by the publisher of the basal reading series used in this school.

Analysis of probable cause data indicate that students lack phonemic skill ability when decoding and spelling words. Reviews of curricula content and instructional strategies reveal a stronger emphasis on Whole Language approach to teaching reading as opposed to a more phonetic approach.

A review of solution strategies suggested by noted experts in reading research has resulted in the selection of using a more "balanced" approach to teaching reading to first graders. Intervention will employ implementation of the "Working with Words" strategies (Cunningham) in addition to the school's basal program.

Post intervention data will indicate an improvement in the phonemic awareness and phonetic skills needed to decode and spell words. This is shown through letter identification, developmental phonics inventory scores, and basal tests. This will occur through students performing "Working with Words" strategies on a weekly basis.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

Students in the targeted first grade classrooms lack the phonic ability and phonemic awareness needed when decoding print and spelling. This interferes with the students' academic growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem include a letter identification test, a developmental phonics inventory, and theme and skills tests developed by the publisher of the basal reading series used in this school.

Immediate Problem Context

The school has a total enrollment of 658 (1996-1997 school year) students in grades, kindergarten through fifth grade. Of these 658 students, 95.7 percent are Caucasian, 0.8 percent are African-American, 2.1 percent are Hispanic, and 1.4 percent are Asian. A small percentage of students, four percent, are identified as individuals from families that receive public aid, are living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, being supported in foster homes with public funds, or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. The attendance rate is 96.0 percent and there is a mobility rate of 10.0 percent.

The site is part of a unit district that comprises an area of 116 miles. It is one of eleven, kindergarten through fifth grade,

schools. The school is set in a suburban neighborhood. The enrollment of the district has steadily increased since the middle of the 1980's. The greatest growth has been during the past five years with enrollment expanding by over three thousand students since September of 1991. The school is at an uncomfortable enrollment size for the physical space available. The average class sizes for kindergarten and first grade are 28.0 and the third grade average totals 31 students.

The majority of full-time teachers, like the student body, are of Caucasian background. There are a total of eight hundred and three full time teachers in the district. The Caucasian population equals 96.8 percent. The remaining staff is 0.5 percent African-American, 2.5 percent Hispanic, 0.1 percent Asian, and 0.1 Native American. Of the 803 teachers, 25.8 percent are male and 74.2 percent are female. The average teaching experience is 13.8 years. The percentage of teachers with a Bachelors degree is 46.7. The percentage of teachers that went on to earn a Masters degree is 53.5. The average salary of the 803 teachers is 41,866 dollars.

The financial plan for the district is below the state's average. According to the 1995-1996 reports on the expenditure of funds, the district spends 58.7 percent of their funds on education compared to the state average of 75.3 percent. Operating expenditure per pupil is 4,875 dollars, while the state average is 6,158 dollars. The average budget spent on transportation is 4.5 percent, which is slightly higher than the 3.5 percent state average. Again, a significant difference exists between the school district's expenditures from the bond and interest fund, which is 1.8 percent, compared to the state's 5.0

percent. The expenditures from the district's site and construction/capitol improvement fund is currently 26.7 percent which differs from the state average of 3.9 percent.

All schools in this district operate under a site-based management philosophy. The school's improvement team has set working goals for their building. Four of the major goals in the school improvement plan include: the adoption of a social studies curriculum, remaining current in the area of technology, development of a program to address character education, and provide staff development for teachers in the area of writing strategies. An additional concern is that the school is running out of space to house resource teachers and certified staff. To address the over crowding issue, the school added two mobile classrooms. There remains a need for special education to have instructional space to conduct resource classes. The school is also in the process of aligning their curriculum and assessment to the new state standards.

At this site, parents actively support their school. There is an effective Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that has held many successful fund raisers providing the students with new playground equipment and computer printers for classrooms. In addition to the high degree of involvement in the PTO, many parents participate in numerous educational support programs.

The Surrounding Community

The community is located in a suburban area in a midwestern state, that is close to a large metropolitan area. This community has been experiencing rapid population growth. This is due to an influx of new housing developments and the turnover of existing homes from older residents to younger families with children. The

first census (1960) taken after the school's inception in 1956 showed the population of the community to be 2014 residents. A special 1996 census indicated the population had grown to 19,007. A demographic study predicts the village will grow to 31,526 by the year 2020 (Kasarda, 1997).

Regional and National Context of Problem

The problem of students failing to learn to read during the critical first three years of school is a national problem. It is a problem that exists in every community and every school in the country (The Council for Exceptional Children, 1996). Evidence that this issue has reached national importance is reflected in President Clinton's America Reads Challenge. The America Reads Challenge identifies the extreme importance of successfully learning how to read in the early years. This sets the stage for successful reading and citizenship in later years (Kameenui & Lyon, 1998).

In the article, Reading: The First Chapter in Education, (as cited by the Council for Exceptional Children, 1996) it is stated that:

> Most Americans know how central reading is to education. According to a 1994 poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the American Federation of Teachers and the Chrysler Corporation, nearly 70 percent of teachers believe that reading is the "most important" skill for children to learn. Two years earlier, the same polling firm reported that 62 percent of parents believed that reading was one of the most important skills for their children to master. Both teachers and parents ranked reading as more critical than mathematics and computer skills. In other words, there is

> general agreement among researchers and the public that all children must learn to read early in their academic careers. (p.1)

In 1985 the Health Research Extension Act challenged the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to improve the standard of reading research by promoting aggressive, prospective, longitudinal, and multidisciplinary studies. From the studies NICHD supports the America Reads Challenge through an extensive list of propositions about "learning to read" and "reading to learn" (Kameenui & Lyon, 1998 p. 2). The NICHD research program found that 17 to 20 percent of children who have serious reading difficulties struggle with acquiring, retaining, manipulating, and recoding the phonemes (the sound of the English language). They also found that with early identification and intervention we can offset some severe reading difficulties. In addition, it was discovered that the most effective instructional reading methods employ concise instruction in phonemic awareness, explicit instruction in sound-symbol relationships (phonics), and direct, integrated instruction in text reading and comprehension strategies (Kameenui & Lyon, 1998). Johns and Lenski (1997) describe phonemic awareness as the ability to manipulate sounds that are used in letter-sound relationships in reading and writing. Before children learn to read words in print, they must develop the important skill of auditory discrimination--an awareness of how letters and words are used in oral language. Children obtaining phonemic awareness learn to: listen for and distinguish rhyming words; identify words that include the same sound; listen for and count syllables within a word; distinguish the beginning, middle, and ending sounds in

words; count and clap out the number of sounds in words; unite letter sounds to form words; divide words into separate sounds; and match sounds to letters of the alphabet (Callella-Jones & Jordano, 1998, p.4).

Unlike phonemic awareness, phonics, as noted by Adams (1996), refers to a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations. Phonemic awareness and phonics are not the same, but are mutually dependent. Phonemic awareness focuses on the phonemes to form spoken words; phonics instruction associates sounds to written symbols. Together they help children foster word-recognition skills, namely the ability to "sound out" unfamiliar words. Before phonics can be taught, phonemic awareness is critical. Children must be able to hear and maneuver oral sound patterns before they can associate them to print. Phonics instruction depends on a child's ability to segment and blend together sounds he or she hears. Without this ability, children have some confusion with basic decoding skills--an critical component of any reading program. Reading programs that include systematic instruction on letter-to-sound correspondence lead to higher achievement, both in word recognition and spelling (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p.6).

In a 1994 Reading Assessment, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), a federally supported program, reported that more than four out of 10 fourth-graders (42 percent) in the U.S. schools were reading at a 'below basic" level. NAEP also reported that such illiteracy persists in the higher grades. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions about how

widespread students' reading problems really are. Their data suggests that more than one child in six (17.5 percent) will encounter difficulty learning to read during the important first three years of school (Council for Exceptional Children, 1996).

Parents are concerned about their child's progress in reading, more than any other subject. Parents know that in order for students to achieve in math, science, English, history, geography, and other subjects, reading skills must be well developed. Students cannot wrestle with word recognition when they should be reading quickly for comprehension (Swanson, 1998).

At this time there is controversy on how to address this problem. The debate is between the advocates of phonics and the advocates of a whole language approach. Whole language represents a different philosophy about teaching, learning, and the role of language in the classroom. It stresses that children should use language in ways that relate to their own lives and cultures. In the whole language classroom, the final product--the "answer"--isn't as important as the process. Children are encouraged to decode words by their context. The common techniques of whole language teaching--daily journal and letter writing, a great deal of silent and oral reading of real literature, and student cooperation, to name a few--represent that philosophy in action. While phonics and phonemic awareness remain an important tool in the whole language toolbox, they are not given top priority (Education Week on the Web, 1998). In his book, *Teaching our Children to Read*, Honig (1996) expresses his concern with the phonics - whole language debate. He feels that the teaching of reading should not go one way or the other. Instead, teachers should use a more balanced approach to literacy teaching and

include all components.

Ongoing or planned activities surrounding the issue of literacy center upon teacher education programs. To try to fix the problem, a growing number of states are stepping in to mandate that schools of education update their reading methods courses. In Maryland, elementary education majors take four classes in reading instruction and assessment, instead of the current state standard of one. One state is requiring teaching candidates to pass reading instruction competency assessments in order to get a teaching license. In addition, lawmakers in other states are requiring teachers to study phonics instruction to earn a teaching license. Teachers need many strategies at their fingertips to be an effective reading teacher in this day and age. Teachers' Unions and leading groups representing administrators and school board are also calling for policy changes to enhance teachers' knowledge. This would include revamping course-content and graduation requirements for teacher education programs, more rigid accreditation standards for institutions, and tougher licensing rules for elementary teachers (Bradley, 1998).

This is an important time in the history of American education. Schools are being enlisted to promote a higher level of education for all students. Doing this demands that the process of "learning to read" be in place for all students by the end of the third grade. Recent gains in our knowledge of the reading process have given us instruments to assist a greater number of students. Even those students who are learning disabled can learn to read at a functional level in today's world. The challenge is to put this new knowledge in the hands of educators, parents, and school administrators so that the many American students who would

fail to learn to read, will instead join a nation of readers (Council for Exceptional Children, 1996).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Students in the targeted first grade classrooms lack the phonemic awareness and phonic skills needed when decoding print and spelling. Evidence of the problem is documented by four non-standardized tests given to measure early literacy development. These evaluation tools provide data about the phonemic awareness skills and strategies students are using to learn to read and write.

The research was conducted at a school where phonic and phonemic knowledge is assessed quarterly beginning in kindergarten through grade two. Few of the lowest performing students in first grade are often referred to the special education program for possible special education placement or inclusionary support.

The assessments used to document the students use of phonics and phonemic awareness in reading and writing are a letter identification test, a developmental spelling inventory, and reading and thematic skills tests provided by the publisher of the basal used at this school. These assessments are administered to guide instruction and document the progress of the students. In this chapter we will discuss the results of these assessments.

Letter Identification Test

Forty-eight targeted first grade students were tested using a letter identification test on the 26 lower case letters and the 26 upper case letters of the alphabet. This test was created by the researchers, along with the other first grade teachers who work with them. In administering this test, the instructor displays letters both capital and lower case for the children to identify. At the beginning of the school year, sixty-seven percent of the students identified 52 letters with little or no difficulty. The remaining thirty-three percent identified fifty letters or less. By the end of the first quarter all of the forty-eight students were recognizing all 52 letters.

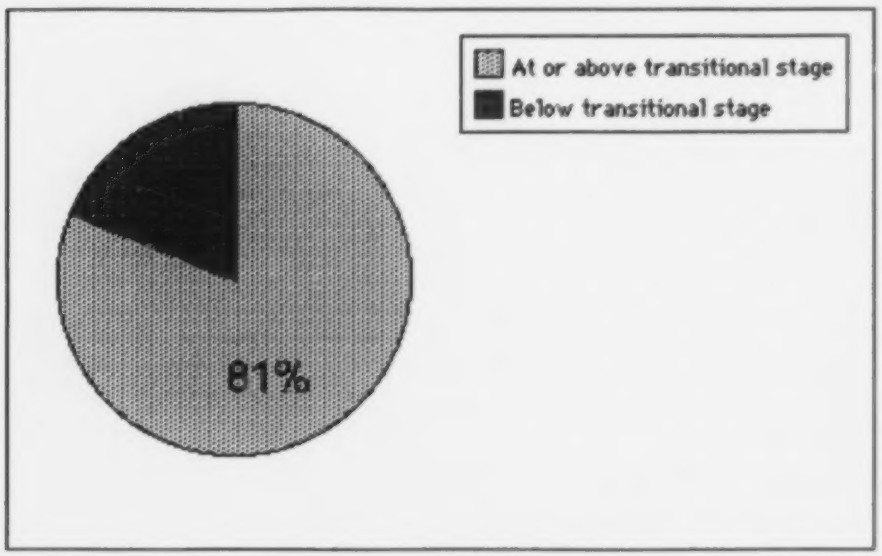
Developmental Phonics Inventory

The developmental phonics test is an assessment used to measure individual student's knowledge of phonics; consonants, vowels, blends, etc. (Pittman, Schefelbein, 1992). These authors are Reading Specialists in the researchers district. This is a test used by all primary teachers within this district. This test analyzes children's spelling strategies. Many teachers encourage children to "spell it the way it sounds". This philosophy supports inventive spelling. Inventive spelling serves as a "window" into the word knowledge that underlies reading performance. Invented spellings, analyzed within a developmental framework, can be used as (a) an indirect measure of current reading ability, and (b) a good predictor of later reading achievement (Morris, 1984). Given a list of 18 words each word is given a value of five points if spelled correctly resulting in a perfect score of 90. Students who score 0-36 are considered to be prephonetic. Once children know how to write the letters of the

alphabet, their early prephonetic spellings incorporate the initial consonant and sometimes final consonant of single syllable words (Morris, 1984). Students who score 37-54 would be considered phonetic. In the phonetic stage vowels begin to emerge in the spellings. The children sound their way through the word to be spelled, making one-to-one, discernible sound-letter matches as they write (Morris, 1984). Students who score 55-72 are considered to be transitional. In the transitional stage the children begin to depict short vowels correctly and to denote long vowels even though the vowel denotations are often placed incorrectly. Transitional spellings reflect that the children are beginning to leave behind their concept of English spelling as a fixed one-to-one, sound-letter code. Instead, these transitional spellers are searching resourcefully for the acceptable chunks or patterns of letters that precisely map the sounds of the spoken language to the graphic system (Morris, 1984). Students who score 73-90 are considered to have strong phonetic development. Within the study, eighty-one percent of students scored at or above the transitional phonetic level at the end of the second quarter of the school year. The nine lowest scoring students of the targeted first grade classes scored below the transitional stage. Their scores varied from 39 points to 53 points indicating a discrepancy even within this transitional stage. This discrepancy included students who had no sound/letter correspondence to those who were just beginning to use phonetic spelling including vowels that may or may not have been correct.

Figure 1

Developmental Phonics Scores at the End of the Second Quarter



Houghton Mifflin Basal Series Skills and Theme Test

The school uses the Houghton Mifflin Literature Experience as part of their reading program. The program has a variety of resources that evaluate children's growth in literacy. Theme tests assess children's ability to construct meaning from the type of literature in the theme. They also assess understanding of the theme's major outcomes and supporting skills, in a format that reflects instruction. Each theme test includes an authentic reading selection followed by written-response and multiple-choice questions. For this study the researchers concentrated on the decoding portion of the assessment. The skills survey assesses student understanding of discrete reading skills. Each survey covers the phonics, decoding, comprehension, and information (reference and study) skills included in each unit of study. The skills survey is group-administered, and all questions are in a

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multiple-choice format. For purposes of this study the researchers only used the scores from the decoding portion of this test. At the end of the second quarter 10% of the students scored at or less than 47 points. According to the publisher of the basal, students receiving scores of 47 points or less, will need instruction of skill development in phonics/decoding skills. Ninety percent had scored adequately or above grade level expectations in phonics and decoding.

The letter recognition test, developmental phonics inventory, and the basal thematic and skills tests are informal measures of early phonemic awareness and phonetic skills. These assessments provide important information about the decoding strategies and phonic knowledge the students were using. The results of these assessments indicated that the lowest scoring students were weak in phonemic awareness and the phonetic skills which may enable them to become more fluent readers. Even though the researchers found that the lowest scoring students improved in their letter identification during the first quarter, this did not appear to help them improve their phonemic awareness and phonetic skills as indicated by their accomplishments on the developmental phonics inventory and the basal tests. These students were not aware that the letters of the alphabet exemplify certain sounds and that letters are combined to make words.

Three of the lowest scoring students from the targeted first grade classes were recommended for additional reading support. This extra support was provided by an additional teacher that worked with these targeted children in small groups. These students received reading support services for thirty minutes a day, Monday through Friday. The intent of the reading support

teacher was to support the students in attaining reading skills and strategies that would boost them towards becoming independent readers and would move them to the average or middle scoring range.

Probable Causes

Educators have expressed various probable causes for students not having the phonemic awareness that is needed to help them read and decode, which in turn helps them become independent readers. Recent longitudinal studies of reading acquisition have demonstrated that the acquisition of phonemic awareness is highly predictive of success in learning to read. In fact, phonemic awareness abilities in kindergarten (or in that age range) appear to be the best single indicator of successful reading acquisition (Cunningham, J., Cunningham, P. M., Hoffman, J.V., & Yopp, H.K. 1998). In an article by Murray (1998), he agreed with Juel (1988) that children with minimal phonemic awareness usually struggle in learning to read and spell words, developing a wide achievement gulf between themselves and peers who are phonemically aware. In fact, an 80% majority of children do develop phonemic awareness by the middle of first grade (Cunningham et al., 1998). The researchers concern lies with the 20% that do not develop phonemic awareness.

We are now aware that children brought up in homes where someone takes the time to encourage reading and writing activities come to school with a strong foundation which we as teachers can build upon (Cunningham, P.M. 1995).

In her book, Beginning to Read, Adams states:

We are also aware that there are homes that do not encourage

> preschoolers' literacy skills. These homes can be identified by neither income, social class, parental education, nor race, but by values and styles of the social communities to which they belong. These students come to first grade at a great disadvantage because they may not have been introduced to nursery rhymes or tongue twisters, which equips them with an ear for the sounds of words. These children may not have been read to or have observed adults reading. Literacy rich homes also may provide children with magnetic letters on the refrigerator, home computers with word and letter games, reading in preschool, many writing supplies located around the house, and even television shows for preschoolers, like "Sesame Street". It is easy to see that children who lack experiences with any of the previously mentioned literacy tools would not have learned the alphabet or mastered many phonemic skills. (p. 86)

For many students the ability to use phonemic awareness does not come naturally; however, concise instruction in phonemic awareness can be given before and during reading instruction (Johns & Lenski,1997). There may even be a small percentage of students who may have some underlying disability that prevents the development of phonemic awareness. In this geographic area, there are significant incidences concerning these students in regards to mobility and unstable home life that may have effected the child's ability to acquire phonemic awareness and phonetic skills.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

The literature search for solution strategies that will help beginning readers develop phonemic awareness and phonetic skills begins with the research dating back more than two decades. This research has affirmed the significance of phonemic awareness and phonetic development along with their relationship with learning to read. The presence of phonemic awareness is a trait of good readers while its absence is a consistent trait of poor readers (Kameeniu, Simmons, Smith, 1998).

One reason why educators are so interested in phonemic awareness is that research indicates that it is the best predictor of the ease of early reading acquisition, better even than IQ, vocabulary, and listening comprehension (Sensenbaugh, 1996). If phonemic awareness is the best predictor of success in beginning reading, should we not put all our time and effort in kindergarten and early reading to develop it? Most researchers in this area promote conscious and purposeful attention to the development of phonemic awareness as a part of a broad instructional program in reading and writing (Cunningham, Cunningham, Hoffman, & Yopp, 1998).

Phonemes are the smallest meaningful sounds in a language. English has 44 phonemes that its speakers integrate to make all its words. Cat, for example, has three: "kuh-aa-tuh." In order to read, one must understand that the sounds in a word can be broken up this way; it must also be understood that letters represent these sounds. Some people appear to possess phonemic awareness instinctively, but others must be taught this skill, which can be done with simple practice. Once phonemic awareness is established and some sound-letter correspondences (phonics) are learned, the brain begins to distinguish new patterns by itself (Collins, 1997). Thus, the awareness that language is composed of these small sounds is defined as phonemic awareness. Research indicates that, without direct instructional support, phonemic awareness circumvents roughly 25 percent of middle-class first graders and considerably more of those who come from less literacy-rich experiences. Furthermore, these children demonstrate serious difficulty in learning to read and write (Adams, Foorman, Lundburg, Beeler, 1998). Eighty percent of children do develop phonemic awareness by the middle of first grade (Cunningham et al., 1998).

According to Adams (1996), there are at least five distinct levels of phonemic awareness:

1. The most undeveloped level can be measured by knowledge of nursery rhymes. This involves nothing more than distinguishing between the sounds of words.

2. The next level, requires the child to methodically compare and contrast the sounds of words for rhyme or alliteration; this demands not just sensitivity to similarities and differences in the overall sounds of words, but also the

ability to target attention on the components of their sounds that make them similar of different.

3. The tasks at the third level, blending and syllable-splitting, requires the child have ample familiarity with the concept that words can be subdivided into those small, meaningless sounds corresponding to phonemes and, next, that she or he be familiar with the way phonemes sound when "in isolation". To take it one step further, a child at this stage can produce the sounds by themselves.

4. The phonemic segmentation tasks require not only that the child have a thorough understanding that words can be completely analyzed into a series of phonemes but also that she or he be able to analyze them, thoroughly on demand.

5. The phoneme manipulation tasks necessitates still further that the child have adequate mastery with the phonemic structure of words so that she or he be able to add, delete, or move any specific phoneme and make a new word (or a nonword) from the result.

Cunningham (1995) agrees that phonemic awareness develops through a series of stages during which children first become aware that language is made up of individual words, phonemes. Children develop this phonemic awareness as a result of the oral and written language they are exposed to in the preschool years. Nursery rhymes, chants, and Dr. Suess books usually play a large role in this development. Lap reading in which children can see the print being read to them also plays an important role. Several different research studies have compared achievement of children who have received training in phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondences. Research studies have demonstrated

that children who have been specifically taught phonemic awareness tasks in kindergarten significantly outperform untrained children in reading and spelling during the primary grades, and training in phonemic awareness *and* letter-sound correspondences produces superior learning to training in either skill alone (Fischer, 1993).

Knowing that some children lack phonemic awareness and that phonemic awareness is critical to learning to read and write, we begin to see the importance of making a place for its instruction. In fact, research clearly shows that phonemic awareness can be developed through instruction, and also, that doing so significantly facilitates children's subsequent reading and writing achievement (Adams et al.,1998). Children with little phoneme awareness usually struggle in learning to read and spell words, developing a wide achievement gap between themselves and peers who are phonemically aware (Murray,1998).

Intervention for learners who have difficulty with phonemic awareness must be early, strategic, systematic, and carefully designed. It must be based on a curriculum that recognizes and balances the importance of both phonics instruction and the appreciation of meaning. In the introduction to the Guide to Balanced Reading (1996), Baltas and Shafer state that teachers realize that areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading skills and strategies were critical to producing fluent, independent readers. There needs to be a balance between literature and intentional skills instruction.

In the article, Reading: The First Chapter in Education, the Council for Exceptional Children (1996, p.3) stated:

Phonemic awareness activities build on and enhance children's

experiences with written and spoken language. A beginning reader with successful phonemic awareness and knowledge of letters is likely to learn how words are represented in print. For children who have difficulty reading, effective reading instruction strategies should be used to build phonemic awareness and alphabetic understanding. These strategies should be clear, making phonemes prominent in children's attention and perception. For example, teachers can model a specific sound and in turn ask the children to produce the sound. In addition, opportunities to engage in phonemic awareness activities should be plentiful, frequent, and fun.

Instructional strategies should consider the characteristics that make a word easier or more difficult to read. These include: the numbers of phonemes in the word; phoneme position in words (initial sounds are easier); phonemic properties of words (e.g., constituents,such an /m/, are easier than ending sounds, such as at /t/); and phonemic awareness dimensions (including blending sounds, segmenting words, and rhyming). The early stages of literacy development will require greater teacher assistance and support. Using a research-based strategy known as scaffolding, teachers should provide students with lots of instructional support in the beginning stages of reading instruction, and gradually reduce the support as students learn more about reading skills. The ultimate goal is for students to read on their own without the help of a teacher.

Phonemic awareness and phonic lessons tied to literature help children discover sound patterns through listening and speaking. Audio tapes of rhymes and oral games are used to help families in

their quest to develop phonemic awareness in their children (Fiderer, 1996). One of the best ways for children to acquire phonemic awareness naturally is through the use of children's literature that centers on some kind of play with the sounds of language. For this reason, selections of literature that model rhyme, alliteration, and sound substitutions should be incorporated into a child's reading program (Opitz , 1998).

Children also develop a sense of sounds and words as they try to write. In the beginning, many children let a single letter stand for an entire word. Later, they put more letters and often say the word they want to write, dragging out its sounds to hear what letters they might use. Children who are allowed and encouraged to invent-spell, develop an early and strong sense of phonological awareness (Cunningham, 1995). In their article, Developmental Spelling as a Predictor of First-Grade Reading Achievement, Morris and Perney cite the findings of C. Read. His findings showed that preschoolers applied inherent phonological knowledge in a systematic manner in their spellings. That is, the children's omission or substitution of specific letters in their spellings was not random or haphazard; rather, it was based on an underlying knowledge of how speech sounds are made in the human vocal tract.

Most phonemic awareness activities are oral. These activities are playful in nature and provide an engaging way for children to discriminate the sounds that make up words. For example, oral blending exercises help children to hear how sounds are put together to make words. These activities will lead to decoding, in which children begin sounding out or blending words independently. Children who have difficulty orally blending words

will have difficulty blending, or sounding out, words while reading. Oral blending exercises begin with blending larger word parts, such as syllables, and progress to blending onsets (the initial part of a word that proceeds a vowel) and rimes (the vowel and the following letters), and finally whole word sound by sound. The earliest oral blending exercises use words that begin with continuous consonants, such as s, m, l, f, r, and z. These consonant sounds can be sustained without distortion. This makes it easier for children to hear the distinct sounds and efficiently model the principle of oral blending, because all the sounds in the words can be "sung" together in a more natural manner. For example, the word 'sat' can be stretched out and sound like this "sssssaaaaaaat". Movements can be added to help children note when the speaker goes from one sound to the next. Many children will benefit from these visual cues (Blevins 1997). In Tips for Teachers, the Council for Exceptional Children promotes the teaching of phonemic awareness as a top priority. Teachers should plan many short, amusing activities that involve the instruction of phonemic awareness in their classrooms.

In the Four Block model (Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 1999), there are four different approaches to teaching children to read. In the Working with Words Block, the children learn to read and spell high-frequency words and practice patterns that allow them to decode and spell other words. Some of the activities used in this block are:

- Word Wall - a wall on which to display important words. It is a display of high frequency words from our basal series and are words that have strong phonemic value. Ten minutes everyday are devoted to Word Wall activities. Activities

include calling out the words from the wall (visual), chanting or word cheers (auditory/rhythmic), writing the word (kinesthetic), and On-The-Back-Activities (transfer).

- Cross Check (sometimes called Guess the Covered Word) - writing sentences on the board or chart and covering the word to be guessed with sticky notes. The first sticky note covers the first letters of the word up to the first vowel. The second sticky note will cover the first vowel and all of the rest of the letters in the word. This helps children to learn to do two things at the same time/think about what would make sense and think about letter and sounds. Word Length, beginning letters, and common sense are all powerful clues to the identity of an unknown word.
- Making Words - in this activity children arrange letters to make words. They start by making little words using a few of the letters and then move on to bigger words. The final word uses all the letters and the children discover the word that can be made by using every letter. In this activity children learn how to look for patterns in words and how changing just one letter or the location of the letter changes the whole word. A follow-up activity is Sorting the Words, where the students sort the words they made (in the Making Words lesson) by letter patterns and rhyming. Still another follow-up activity is transferring the words where students add new words to their sorted lists or are able to place other words that have the same letter patterns in the correct sorted category.
- Tongue Twisters - are used to reinforce beginning letters, consonant digraphs and blends. More advanced students use

this opportunity to practice their dexterity with language.

- Rounding up Rhymes - reading books that contain rhyme. Children identify the words that rhyme in the story and the teacher places them on cards. Then students identify spelling patterns. Transfer occurs when students use the spelling patterns to help them read other words that rhyme and have the same spelling pattern as those collected from the story.
- Opposites Riddle - challenges the students to identify a words by presenting a word wall "riddle" where the clue you give is the word that means the opposite of the word wall word you want the students to identify. For example, word number one begins with the letter 'p' and is the opposite of ugly (pretty).
- Be-a-Mind-Reader - teacher picks one word and gives three clues. The children are given a numbered form to use to record their guesses for the word the teacher has chosen. These words would be from the word wall.
- Hink Pinks - are rhyming pairs. Children illustrate them and make up and solve riddles for which Hink Pinks are the answers. Hink Pinks help children attend to the relationship between spelling patterns and rhymes. Examples of Hink Pinks are 'brain strain, rude dude, and brown crown'.

Thanks to many years of research on emergent literacy, teachers finally understand what is meant when it is said that a child is 'not ready'. Educators know that many children have hundreds of hours of literacy interactions during which they develop understanding critical to their success in beginning reading. Teachers must now structure their school programs to try to provide for all children what some children have had. This

will not be an easy task. Teachers do not have 1000 hours. They do not have the luxury of working with one child at a time. Educators cannot wait until the child picks the opportune learning moment. Teachers must do all they can in ways that mimic literature experiences that children should have received in their homes (Cunningham, 1995).

Project Objectives

As a result of implementing the Making Words Block (Cunningham, 1998) as part of the researchers language arts instruction on a daily basis, during the period of January 1999 to June 1999, the first grade students who lack phonemic awareness and the phonetic skills to decode and spell words will increase in these endeavors, as measured by the developmental phonics test and decoding scores from basal skills and theme tests.

Process Statements

The researchers will implement the Making Words Block (Cunningham, 1998) as part of our language arts instruction on a daily basis. This will incorporate the use of the Word Wall and various Making Words activities. To do this the researchers will need to develop a Word Wall using high frequency words from the basal series and words that have strong phonemic value. The researchers will need to develop a daily, thirty minute lesson plan that incorporates the Word Wall and Making Words Activities for each day of the week. Interventions will begin in January, at the beginning of the third quarter. Base line scores will come from student achievement at the end of the second quarter in developmental phonics and basal series scores for decoding in theme and skills tests. The intervention will continue the through the fourth quarter. At the end of the fourth quarter

children will be assessed to determine levels of growth or acquisition of skills.

Project Action Plan

In the researcher's first grade classrooms there was a thirty minute Working with Words Block every day. The block began every day from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. This time was chosen because all of the students would be in attendance. This block provided systematic, multi-level instruction focusing on phonics and phonemic awareness. The researchers chose this intervention because the basal program they used is a 'literature based' series that lacks in the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness.

Interventions began in January, at the beginning of the third quarter. Base line scores came from totals at the end of the second quarter in developmental phonics and decoding scores from the basal skills and themes tests. The block continued through the fourth quarter to confirm findings and to account for students who may have a developmental delay.

The researchers implemented the Working with Words Block as a part of their language arts instruction on a daily basis. This incorporated all of the activities previously mentioned in the Literature Review.

Ten minutes every day were spent doing Word Wall activities with focus on high-frequency word recognition. The remaining twenty minutes of the Working with Words Block were spent doing activities which stressed phonemic awareness and phonetic skills.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, tests covering developmental phonic achievement and decoding skills will be administered. These tests will be given at the end of the

third and fourth quarters. These assessment methods will determine growth in the child's phonemic awareness and decoding skills needed to improve early literacy development.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to identify first grade students who lack the phonemic awareness and the phonic ability needed to decode print and spell. The implementation of the Working with Words Block developed by Patricia Cunningham (1998), in a daily classroom schedule was selected to reduce the student's decoding deficits by teaching phonics and phonemic awareness.

In order to meet the goal of providing children with a variety of avenues to becoming literate, language arts instructional time was divided fairly between the four major historical approaches to reading instruction. Those avenues being--guided reading, self-selected reading, writing, and working with words (Cunningham & Hall, 1997). The Working With Words Block is one of four blocks that help children flourish as readers and writers as developed by Cunningham. The block is a period of time that allows for regular instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness at various instructional levels in a whole class setting. The Working with Words Block and its components were

taught to all children at the same time.

The Working with Words Block was established to address phonics and phonemic awareness in January, at the beginning of the third quarter and was employed until the end of the school year. The implementation plan called for a one half hour block daily, during which specific learning activities were to be presented by the teacher and practiced by the students. The skills chosen for the first ten minutes of the block included: Word Wall and cross check activities. The skills chosen for the last twenty minutes of the block included: Making Words, Tongue Twisters, Rounding up Rhymes, Opposites Riddle, Be-a-Mind Reader, and Hink Pinks. A more detailed description of each of these activities can be found on pages 24-26 of Chapter 3 in this document. Lesson plans devoted to each of these activities can be found in Appendix A.

The Word Wall list was derived from both the basal series and the 120 High-Frequency Word list from the book, Classrooms that Work (Allington, Cunningham, 1999). We cross referenced these lists in order to assure that the students would be learning the most commonly found words that also employ phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge. This list can be found in Appendix B. The activities in the classroom that used these words were visual, auditory/rhythmic, kinesthetic, and transfer promoting in nature. These activities were chosen because they provided teaching opportunities for children who came to school with a variety of personalities and learning preferences.

The lessons were developed to be presented on a day-to-day/week-to-week plan. The first day of a week's lesson started with 10-15 minutes introducing five of the words on the word wall. In this period of time, students numbered their paper one to five.

Then the researchers called out the first word on the wall and had the children fix their eyes on the written word (visual). After reading the word, the children cheered for the word using clapping and snapping as they spelled the word (auditory/rhythmic). Each child then proceeded to write the word on the first line of his/her paper (kinesthetic). The researchers wrote the word on the board or on the overhead projector as the children wrote it on their papers to emphasize correct handwriting formation of the letters. If there was time, the researchers would review previously studied words on the word wall. This was done by randomly pointing to review words for the children to identify. On the other days of the week, during the first 10-15 minutes the researchers would expand word study on the word wall words by children investigating word families and adding endings to the word wall words to create new words. To avoid student monotony and to promote student participation the chanting for the words was done in creative ways. Examples of this would be to say the letters in a 'high pitch' voice, 'monster' voice, 'cat' voice, or the researchers would allow students to pick a voice.

Another activity done later in the week, was called Guess-the-Covered-Word. The reason the researchers chose this activity was because it provided an opportunity for the children to learn to do two things simultaneously-think about what would make sense and think about letters and sounds. In this cross-check activity the word wall words, along with other previously studied words were used in sentences. These words were covered with sticky notes, and uncovered progressively. The children were shown the sentences and were told to read each sentence and guess the covered word. Chalkboard or chart space next to the sentence was

used to record each guess that made sense. Once several guesses were given, the paper which covered the first letter(s) was removed. The researchers then erased each guess that did not begin with this letter and asked if there were any more guesses which made sense and started with the correct letter(s). Those guesses were written and then the word was uncovered. Using students names in the sentences brought extra interest to this activity. During in the fourth quarter, as an extension of this activity, students were put into cooperative groups and allowed to make sentences of their own using the word wall words. The students then presented their sentence to the rest of the class in a Guess the Covered Word format.

Throughout the week, in the remaining twenty minutes of the Working with Words Block, the researchers incorporated a variety of activities. An activity used every week was Making Words. Making Words is an energizing, hands-on activity in which children arrange letters to make words, eventually building up to uncovering the identity of a 'mystery' word. This word is connected to a theme being taught in the classroom. The letter cards used for this activity were made by the students. The students made the letter cards by using a premade paper divided into boxes in which the children wrote the letters used for the particular 'mystery word'(Appendix C). The vowels were written in one color and the consonants were written in another color for discrimination purposes. The boxes were then cut out and positioned across their desks. Students were then given another sheet of paper with a line drawn horizontally across the center (Appendix D). This was used as the structure to build the words upon. The researchers began by having the children make little

words using a few of the letters, progressing to larger words, and eventually to the discovery of the 'mystery word'. As children were making the words at their desks, the researchers chose a child who had made the word correctly to make the same word in the pocket chart using large letters. Then the researchers would place a card with the word on it in the pocket chart. Students enjoyed being selected to put letters into the pocket chart. The students who were challenged were generally called to put the smaller words into the chart. These were the words they were able to sound out with ease. More advanced students were generally selected for the more difficult words.

A management problem discovered during this activity involved keeping track of students who came up to the pocket chart. To alleviate this problem, the researchers awarded each student who came up to spell a word in the pocket chart, with a sticker. This sticker was placed on the back of their hand, so that the teacher could visually see who had been called upon. Students could then check and correct their spelling of the word before moving on to the next word.

The researchers found that it was important for each child to say the word they were spelling. This way the student heard the phonemes and transferred the sound to a phonic representation of the word. This phase of the activity provided the opportunity for children to learn how to look for patterns in words and how changing just one letter or its location in the word changes the whole word. The next step of the Making Words lessons involves sorting the words. In this phase, the children sorted words into patterns and used these patterns to read and spell a few new words (transfer). The 'mystery word' was sent home as homework

(Appendix E). Students competed to see who could return the next day with the most words. Throughout all phases of Making Words pace is very important. Waiting for every student to make the word correctly may drag out the lesson and student interest may dwindle. Limiting doing this activity to once a week would keep the interest high.

On other days of the week the researchers did a variety of the afore mentioned activities. Most popular of these activities was Be-A-Mind-Reader. The researchers gave the students three clues, one at a time. The first clue usually was how many letters the word contained. The second clue might have been letters or letter combinations in the word. The final clue was always one that gave the word away. After each clue the students wrote a word that fit into the category from the word wall. The researchers went through five words in this manner. To keep the activity age appropriate for students attention span, the researchers chose to focus on five words. This was a great way to review word wall words. Students enjoyed trying to read the teacher's mind before getting to the third guess. In the process, they spent time scanning words on the word wall. While scanning, they would employ phonetic strategies that had been worked on during the various reading lessons (Appendix F).

Some of the other activities during this Working with Words Block, like Tongue Twisters, Rounding up Rhymes, Opposites Riddle, and Hink Pinks were done intermittently within the curriculum. Whenever the researchers were teaching consonant digraphs and blends, Tongue Twisters was incorporated. For instance, when the researchers were teaching the 'br' blend students were encouraged to make sentences that had many words that began with that

particular blend. An example sentence would be 'Bruce's brother Brian brought brown bread for breakfast'. If the literature being read in class had rhyming words, Rounding up Rhymes or Hink Pinks was used. For example in the story, This is the Bear, from the basal anthology (Pikulski, et al. 1991), there are many rhyming words. While reading the story, the students identified the rhyming words and the researchers listed them on the board. Rhyming words with the same spelling pattern were left on the board, while rhyming words that did not have the same spelling pattern were erased. Students then thought of other words that rhymed with the words left on the board, those words had to have the same spelling pattern. Rhyming was also reinforced when the class made a Hink Pink book, in which they illustrated pairs of rhyming words such as, 'mouse-house' and 'skunk-bunk'. If a story incorporated the use of antonyms, Opposites Riddle was utilized. After reading the story, Toby in the Country, Toby in the City, from the basal anthology (Pikulski, et al. 1991), the researchers stressed the concept of antonyms. This was done in conjunction with Word Wall words. The researchers would say "I am thinking of a Word Wall word that is opposite of 'in'". The students then scanned the Word Wall for the antonym, 'out'.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the phonemic awareness and phonetic strategies that were utilized during the intervention, end of the quarter assessments on decoding and developmental phonics were used. This data was collected and tabulated at the end of second, third, and fourth quarters of the school year and is presented in Figures 2 and 3 located on pages 37 and 38.

Figure 2 shows that significant progress was seen for both the third and fourth quarters in developmental phonics. The figure indicates that the largest increase in phonemic awareness and phonetic skills occurred between the second and third quarters of the school year. The researchers conclude that consistent, weekly lessons with Making Words, in which students practiced building words, enhanced their ability with phonemic awareness and phonetic skills. The students became more confident in making connections between letters and sounds as they practiced manipulating the letters during the lessons. Between the third and fourth quarter there was continued growth, as more students scored in the transitional range.

Figure 3 shows that students showed growth in decoding skills in the third quarter. However, an interesting result occurred in the fourth quarter. The researchers found that students scored lower in decoding skills after the fourth quarter. This may have occurred due to a difference of test administration between the third and fourth quarters. For the first three quarters of the year, the test was administered orally by the instructor. The instructor reads a sentence that has a missing word. Under the sentence there is a choice of words that completed the sentence. The words were similar, but different. An example sentence read by the instructor was, 'My friends and I like to fly my _____.' The choices for answers were, 'kit', 'kite', or 'side'. The student had to read the choices on their own and select the appropriate word. In the fourth quarter, the test is to be read independently by the student, including the sentence normally read by the instructor. Students use many strategies in decoding during the test. Students may have used picture clues, context

clues, as well as letter-sound relationships. For some students, concentrating at trying to decode the vocabulary in the sentences was frustrational due to readability that was beyond their independent reading level. When work is frustrational for students, their emotions get in the way of their reason and they cannot decode accurately in a consistent manner. The reason the test was administered this way was a joint decision made by the researchers and the team of teachers at this grade level. The researchers conclude that this difference in administration accounts for the deviation between third and fourth quarters.

Figure 2
Developmental Phonics-Students Scoring At Or Above Transitional Phonetic Level

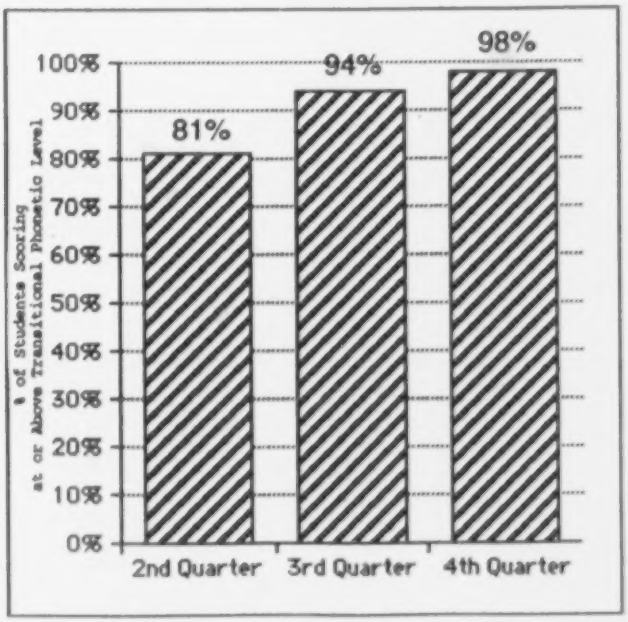
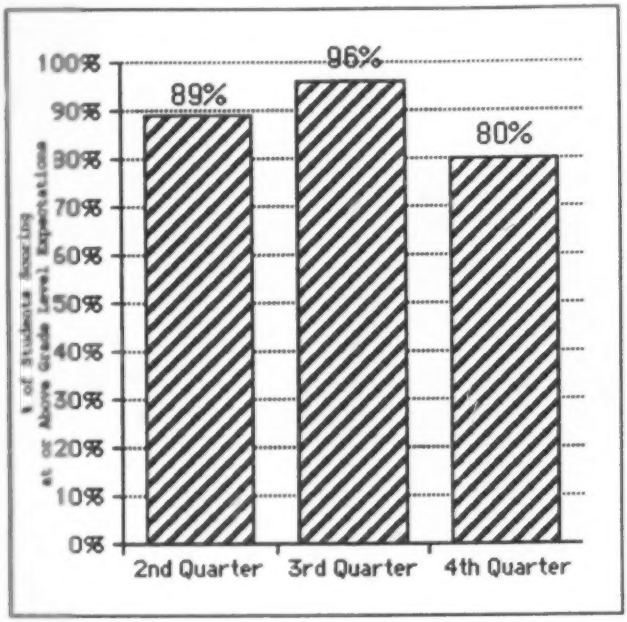


Figure 3
Decoding Scores-Basal Series Students Scoring At Or Above Grade Level Expectations



Conclusions

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on phonemic awareness and phonics, the targeted first grade low scoring students showed a marked improvement in their ability to use phonemic awareness and phonetic strategies while reading and decoding. The students who were deficient in phonemic awareness and phonetic abilities were able to show growth in these areas through regular daily practice in the Working with Words Block.

Extensive research indicates that a balanced literacy program should include daily lessons and practice with phonemic awareness and phonics. Working with Words should be one part of a balanced

literacy diet combined with other essential components, such as shared reading, self-selected reading, and writing. All children's literacy levels develop at their optimum timetable. The Four Block Framework (Cunningham, 1999) could be used as a guide in providing a balanced approach to literacy learning. It is important to stick to a schedule when using the blocks. Teachers may find themselves spending more time on an activity or block and then not having time to give to the other activities or blocks within the program.

The researchers found the activities provided in the Working with Words Block to be more 'hands-on' as opposed to paper and pencil practice. These hands-on activities involved all students and often were multi-level in nature, unlike worksheets that are most often not multi-level. Because different children are at all varied stages at their word learning, Word Wall activities provided practice for students who were struggling to read high frequency words. Word Wall activities benefited children who were fast word learners by providing much needed handwriting instruction. During student writing lessons, the Word Wall became a popular place as students used it to find words they wanted to use and spell correctly in their writing. Students also used Word Wall words to help them spell related words. An example of this would be using the Word Wall word 'make' to help spell the words shake, bake, take, etc..

While sorting words during the Making Words lesson, the researchers found that even children who are at varied phonemic and phonetic levels were interested and motivated to participate. When the students brought home their homework with the 'mystery word', they were very enthused at the option of having parents

guess the 'mystery word'. The homework activity provided a home-school connection, making parents aware of this activity and giving them the opportunity to experience it at home.

The researchers found Making Words to be multi-level because they could see all levels of children growing in their word knowledge. Struggling students and average ability students were able to work on their phonemic awareness and phonetic skills by manipulating sounds and letters in words. Those children whose letter-sound knowledge is more advanced were motivated to figure out the 'mystery' word. In their quest, the students were working with concepts surpassing initial sound and rhyme. Children enter first grade with all different levels of word knowledge, therefore, Making Words activities provide the varied levels of children the ability to make discoveries about words.

Decoding strategies were enhanced by using Guess the Covered Word. The researchers found that this activity reinforced the use of the reading strategies taught through the basal series. This connection to already established curriculum was appreciated.

Recommendations

In order to teach the strategies that are necessary for first grade students to become more proficient in phonemic awareness and phonics, it is recommended that first grade teachers educate children with a balanced approach to literacy suggested by experts. The researchers recommend using the Making Words Block in conjunction with the other three blocks; self-selected reading, shared/guided reading, and writing on a daily basis. Doing this will provide the balance needed to nurture beginning reading skills.

A suggestion the researchers have for the Working with Words Block, involves the possibilities of having a volunteer or assistant in the classroom. If someone is available during this block, this person could sit with a struggling student during fast-paced activities, such as Making Words. The assistant could also help in preparation of making words for the Word Wall and preparing words and letters for the Making Words lesson. This preparation is time consuming.

The researchers strongly recommend revising how testing is administered during the fourth quarter. A suggestion would be to have the students all take the test as administered in this study. Then have those students having difficulty with the reading, retake the test again. This time the instructor would read the assessment in the manner it was administered during the first three quarters.

In their many years of teaching young children, the researchers have experienced many trends in the teaching of reading. The Four Block model, which includes the Working with Words Block, is the first program that appears to have a good balance of all the components that are needed to reach all children with their different learning styles. This program works well for all primary grades. For students who are still having difficulty with various decoding strategies in the intermediate grades, a supplement to Working with Words has been developed by the same authors. The research accumulated through this study has confirmed the researchers' belief that their students need systematic direct teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics. This should be part of their daily literacy diet in order to build strong healthy readers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WORKING WITH WORDS

LESSON PLANS

Week 1 -

Day One

Word Wall Words
am
name
went
about
big

review words:
are
baby
can
do
father

Days 3, and 4

On-The-Back-Activities
Rhyming word families

am	name	
ham	blame	
Pam	tame	
ram	shame	
jam	same	
dam	game	
slam	fame	
wham	came	

went	big	
bent	wig	pig
sent	twig	rig
tent	dig	
dent	gig	
lent	jig	

Day 5

Adding endings to words:
name - naming - names - named
big - bigger - biggest
can - canned - canning - cans

Guess the covered word
(words from the previous word lists)

1. When you want to play a game be sure to call a friend.

2. I was happy when I saw what I got for Christmas.

3. My house is red and green.

4. Would you like to join our club?

5. When a friend is in trouble, it is a good idea to help them.

6. I need to name my dog.

7. I like sing.

Making Words

Day 1 and 2
pictures

Day 3
sorting

Day 4
transfer

Week 2 (short week due to Martin Luther King and Inservice)

Day One -

Word Wall Words
or
other
school
want
write

Review Words
get
have
in
look
mother

Day 2 and 3
On-the-back-activities
Rhyming word families
(word families)

other
mother
brother
another

school
tool
pool
stool
cool
fool

write
brite
site
lite
kite
white
bite
nite

Words with endings
school - schooling ,schooled, schools
want - wants, wanted, wanting
other - others
write - writer, writing, writes

Guess the covered word:

1. I used the oven to bake food.
2. I like to eat bread.
3. I have to put my hat on my head.
4. Mother ran to the store.
5. Mom went to work today.

Making Words:

surprise

Week 3

Word Wall Words:

DAY ONE
brother
new
his
if
been

DAY TWO
Brief review of word wall words this week
Review Words:
not
out
pet
run
said

DAY THREE
On-the-back-activities
Rhyming word families

new
phew
mew
pew
chew
stew
hew - to cut
dew
flew

DAY FOUR
Tounge twisters with 'br' blends

Bruce's brother Brian brought brown bread for breakfast.

(pull out 'br' blend cards for pocket chart)

DAY FIVE
Guess the covered word

1. This afternoon I will go outside and plant.
2. I think it's fun to dig.
3. I have to work in the garden.
4. I like doing something to help.
5. Don't be late.

MAKING WORDS

Windows (160)

Day 1
making words for windows

Day 2
sort for w, in, od, and ow

Day 3
transfer
r(-od), h(-ow)

Day 4
review spelling words
(ate words)

Day 5
cooperative groups (4)
(review word wall word)

Each group makes a guess the covered word sentence.
Jobs -writer, police, materials, teacher
Head teacher checks groups sentence.
marker, strips, post-it

Week 4

Word Wall Words:

DAY ONE
make
small
very
as
boy

DAY TWO
Brief review of word wall words this week
Review Words:

the
time
upon
what
would

Be a Mind Reader

Day THREE
On-the-back-activities
Rhyming word families

make

take	rake
stake	shake
fake	bake
cake	lake
Jake	take
wake	

small

ball	wall
hall	tall
call	fall
mall	

DAY FOUR
Words with endings
make - makes, making, maker
small - smaller, smallest
boy - boys

DAY FIVE
Give the spelling test

MAKING WORDS
Gardens (91) - Making More Words

Day 1
making words for gardens

Day 2
r, g, gr, s (plural), er (ending), ear, ag

Day 3
transfer
fear, flag, grades, ears

Day 4
sm- tounge twisters

Day 5
Guess the covered word

1. In the morning we get up early.
2. I worked in the garden.
3. Now I am eating.
4. Then I'll be playing with my friends.
5. I like doing something to help.

Week 5
(Three day week to 100's day and
President's day)
Day One- Carry over from previous week

Word Wall Words
Review Words - Day Two - Wednesday
(Be a Mind Reader)

your
and
bear
could
day

Day Three
spelling test

Making Words (Phonics by Month p.78)

Day One - Tuesday
Valentine

Day Two- Wednesday
Sort
an, et, eat, ine

Day Three-Thursday
Transfer
jet, wheat, shine, than

Week 6

Word Wall Words

Day One
him
right
by
made
call

Day Two-Review (Be a Mind Reader)
friend
guess
hide
it
like

Day Three

him	right
Tim	bright
dim	light
slim	night
Kim	sight
trim	fight
rim	might
brim	slight
swim	freight

Day Four
Review Spelling

Day Five
Spelling Test

Making Words

Day One
dinosaur

Day Two
sorting
s, r, un, oar, our, ound, gun,

Day Three
transfer
stun, boar, and found

Day Four
In pairs have students write a guess the covered word sentence using a word from the word wall.

Day Five
Have pairs review and present sentence.

Week 7

Word Wall Words
Day One

her
be
eat
after
an

Day Two
Word Wall Review - Be a Mind Reader

my
now
one
play
read

Day Three
On the back activities

eat	an
beat	can
cheat	ban
meat	Dan
pleat	ran
seat	Jan
heat	fan
neat	man
wheat	pan

Day Four
Study for ee spelling test

Day Five
Take the spelling test

Making Words

Day One
George Washington- for fun

Day Two
practice and present the Guess the word sentence in pairs.

Day Three
monster (88)

Day Four
sort - transfer
m, n, sm, oke
spot (ot)
bone (one)

Day Five
Guess the Covered Word

1. A dinosaur is something special.

2. There aren't big dinosaurs now.

3. You wouldn't see a dinosaur in a school or in a garden.

4. I would like to read other books too!

5. I would like to write about dinosaurs.

Week 8 - Monday no school-Casmir P

Word Wall Words
Day One (Tuesday)

had
he
she
so
when

Day Two (Wednesday)
Word Wall Review-Be a Mind Reader
show
that
who
at
best

Day Three (Thursday)
On the back activities
study for spelling test

when
ten
den
Ken
hen
men
wren

had
bad
dad
mad
glad
sad
fad
Tad
Brad

Day Four
Spelling Test

Making Words

Day One
special

Day Two
sort
adding s
rhyming (-ip, -ace, -eal)

Day Three
transfer
trace (-ace) meal (-eal)

Day Four
Guess the Covered Word
(student in class) likes the month _____.

Do five of these
(choose student of the week and four other friends.)

Week 9

Day One
Word Wall Words

why
down
over
ride
caught

Day Two
Word Wall Review-Be A Mind Reader

hurry
laugh
more
once
spring

Day Three
On the back activities
Rhyming

down	caught
brown	taught
town	naughty
gown	haughty

more	ride
bore	side
tore	slide
sore	bride
gore	tide
store	wide
snore	
wore	

Day Four
Study for spelling test

Day Five
Spelling test

Making Words

Day One
beaches

Day Two
Sort
b, c, ash, s-es(plural)
see-sea (homophones)

Day Three
Transfer
crash (-ash)
crashes (es)

Day Four
brainstorm sh words in pairs
share lists as a whole and make a master list.

Day Five
create sentences using the sh digraphs into a tongue twister in pairs. (class book possibility)

She sells seashells by the seashore.

Week 10

Word Wall

Day One
from
girl
little
saw
off

Day Two
Review:Be-A-Mind-Reader
some
them
was
come
don't

Day Three
On the Back Activities
saw
jaw
paw
straw
law
gnaw
draw
yaw - yawn

girl
swirl - ing - ed - s
twirl - ing -ed - s
whirl -ing - ed -s

Day Four
Study for spelling test

Day Five
Spelling Test

Making Words

Day One
Leprechaun

Day Two
sort
cl, pl, -an, -ap, -unch, -ean, -each

Day Four
transfer
trap, bunch, mean, teach

Day Five
Guess the Covered Word

___name___ eats green ___food___.

or

___name___ likes green _____.

Week 11

Word Wall Words
Day One

those
were
has
old
people

Day Two
Review- Be a Mind Reader
could
don't
friend
guess
house

Day Three
On-the-back-activities

those
hose - es
nose - es
rose - es
chose - es

old
mold
old -er
cold
told
gold
bold
hold
sold

Day Four
no activity (beach day)

Day Five
review Word Wall Words

Making Words
Day One
picked

Day Two
sort
d, p, ie, ice, ick, eck

Day Three
transfer
price (ice)
check (eck)

Day Four
no activity - luau

Day Five
Guess the Covered Word with fill in sentences

Week 12

Word Wall Words
Day One

us
use
which
first
sister

Day Two
Be a Mind Reader

wish
tell
read
play
out

Day Three
Rhyming Words

sister
blister
twister
mister

use
muse -es
fuse

us
bus s-es
Gus

Day Four
Review Spelling

Day Five
Spelling Test

Making Words

Day One
umbrella

Day Two
Sorting
b, bl, m, am, ame, all, ear

Day Three
Transfer
slam, stall, smear, tame

Day Four
Rounding Up Rhymes with the story This is the Bear
think of other words that fit the same pattern (look in April's month)

Day Five
finish up Rounding Up Rhymes

Week 13

Word Wall Words
Day One

animal
long
rain
than
because
street

Day Two
Be a Mind Reader

would
upon
teach
spring
of

Day Three
Rhyming Words

long
strong - er -ly -est
wrong
song - s
tong - s

rain	street
pain	meet
stain	feet
brain	fleet
train	beet
chain	
grain	
main	

Day Four
Review Spelling

Day Five
Spelling Test
Making Words

Day One
islands

Day Two
sorting

Day Three
transfer

Day Four
Guess the Covered Word

1. We'll have a great time.
2. I can hear you!
3. Don't stay in.
4. The girl was very mean.
5. Can you listen to me?

Day Five
Introduce Hink Pinks rhyming sets from the list in the book. (106)

Have pairs illustrate them.

APPENDIX B

WORD LIST FOR

WORD WALL

Appendix B
Word Wall List

Week 1
am
name
went
about
big

Week 2
or
other
school
want
write

Week 3
brother
new
his
if
been

Week 4
make
small
very
as
boy

Week 5
him
right
by
made
call

Week 6
her
be
eat
after
an

Week 7
had
he
she
so
when

Week 8
why
down
over
ride
caught

Week 9
from
girl
little
saw
off

Week 10
those
were
has
old
people

Week 11
us
use
which
first
sister

Week 12
animal
long
rain
than
because
street

APPENDIX C

PREMADE GRID

FOR MAKING WORDS

LETTER CARDS

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APPENDIX D

MAKING WORDS

STRUCTURE

Making Words

APPENDIX E

MAKING WORDS

HOMEWORK

Take Home Sheet for Making Words

Please work with the letters your child will be bringing home. Let them cut the letter strips apart into the individual letters. Then work together and see how many words you can make. As you make the words write them in the blanks. Finally, cut the words apart and group them into piles such as those with the same beginning sound, ending sound, word family, etc.. These lessons increase their word knowledge. Have fun working together and good luck!

The 'mystery' word is _____. My child, _____ was able to find ____ words using the chosen letters.

Signature _____

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APPENDIX F

BE A MIND READER

WORKSHEET

Name_____

Be A Mind Reader

1. _____ 1. _____
2. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 3. _____

1. _____ 1. _____
2. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 3. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____